THE MINISTRY OF NATURE, MUSIC, AND TEARS

RAY CLARKSON HARKER

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THE MINISTRY OF NATURE, MUSIC, AND TEARS

The Ministry of Nature, Music, and Tears

By

RAY CLARKSON HARKER, D. D.

Author of "Christian Science," "The Work of the Sunday School," Etc.

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PREFACE

Nature, Music, and Tears speak in a language known by many folks. No one can be wholly indifferent to their triple appeal.

In the three chapters that compose this book the author has sought to express the thoughts that have lived and throbbed in his mind and heart.

The chapter on Nature is not so much a study of "nature for its own sake," as an attempt to see nature as the avenue by which our Father reveals His thoughts to man. As J. C. Van Dyke declares: "Mountains do not 'frown,' trees do not 'weep,' nor do skies 'smile;' they are quite incapable of doing so;" yet they all in their various aspects may symbolize messages for the human heart.

The chapter on The Ministry of Music is simply the placing of an emphasis upon the fact of the close connection of music with what is highest and best in the heritage of the race.

Called upon frequently to minister unto

those in trouble and sorrow, I have often longed for the vision of a seer and the tongue of an angel that I might quiet the whirling brain, solace the aching heart, and still the wild sea of human sorrow. The third chapter is what I have sought in various ways to bring as a balm for all who wait the fuller vision and the open Revelation.

If those who read this wee book shall have eyes, ears, and hearts more open to the Ministry of Nature, Music, and Tears, the author will be graciously rewarded.

R. C. H.

Phoenix, Arizona.

THE MINISTRY OF NATURE

THE MINISTRY OF NATURE

NATURE is one of God's open books. Happy is the man whose heart is open to her message.

> "To him who, in the love of Nature, holds
> Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
> A various language."

Tennyson sang of the "flower in the crannied wall," Wordsworth of the rainbow and of the rose, Burns of the daisy and of the mouse, Homer of the aspen poplar and of the flowing fountain, Byron of the ocean, David of the mountains, rivers, clouds, and stars; and Mrs. Browning of earth as "crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God."

How frequently man has a sealed eye, a curtained vision! We are often blind to the sweet thoughts that lie about us and which ought to find a home in our hearts.

The Ancients confined God to His Creation; we are apt to shut Him out of His Creation. Is there not a golden mean set forth by the words, "God is immanent, but is not limited

by nature; He is transcendent, but is not separated from all or any natural process."

We should see God in His works. The flower is a thought of God put into petal and odor. The blade of grass is His thought, quivering into form. The fluttering leaf is His thought, trembling into vision. "Things are also thoughts and have reference to the Thought that put them there and to the thought that finds them there." It is said of nature, "Reason oozes out of every pore." A Persian poet says, "The world is a bud from the bower of His beauty; the sun is a spark from the light of His wisdom; the sky is a bubble on the sea of His power." The film needs to be cut from our eyes so that we can sing with Horace Smith:

"Were I, O God, in churchless lands remaining,
Far from all voice of teachers or divines,
My soul would find in flowers of Thy ordaining
Priests, sermons, shrines."

Emerson writes:

"Every bird that sings,
And every flower that stars the elastic sod,
And every breath the radiant summer brings,
To the pure spirit, is a word of God."

Henry Van Dyke heard an Englishman say, as he gazed upon the crystal ice masses of the Mer de Glace, "All that ice would bring a lot of money in the hot season at Calcutta—do n't you know?" But Coleridge, looking upon a similar scene, sang of the "icy cliffs" of the "crystal shrine," of the "motionless torrents," of the "silent cataracts" until he was "entranced in prayer and worshiped the Invisible alone."

The myriad objects about us are called "the lyric thoughts of God falling from His Almighty solitude," and all Creation "an Infinite Will rushing into sight."

Nature reveals *thought and design.* The separate moments combined would make hours in which I have sought to find an ear of corn with an uneven number of rows of grains. The even numbers vary, but you can never find an ear with an odd number of rows.

One day, as a man was reading Plato, he came to the words, "God always geometrizes." Lifting his eyes from his book, he saw a flower at his feet. His attention was arrested by it. He took the flower in his hand. He counted

the petals—they numbered five. He counted the stamens—there were five. He counted the divisions at the base of the flower—there were five. This excited his curiosity. He then looked at the other flowers of the same kind, and then cast his eye on the fields filled with them, and exclaimed, "Bloom on, little flowers; you have a God, and I have a God; the God that made these flowers made me."

Agassiz has pointed out that the arrangement of leaves on the stem of a plant is similar to the arrangement of the planets with regard to the sun. It is a law of botany that the turns made on the stem and the leaves passed in reaching another directly above the one you started from form an ascending series—1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, etc. So it is said, "The planets from Neptune to Vulcan revolve around the sun, and complete their orbit in periods which exhibit precisely the same succession of numbers, a series of threes." This is evidence that He who made the flower made the stars. The plant seems like "a miniature solar system." "The leaves of the one answer to the planets of the other; and as the leaves of a plant come closer

and closer together, until, at last, they culminate in the radiance of the flower, so the planets of the solar system come closer and closer together until, at last, they blossom, as it were, in the splendor of the sun."

Nature is marvelous in its revelations of *Beauty*. How beautiful the gushing spring, the flowing fountain, the crystalline pool, the dew-drop on the clover-leaf, the babbling brook, the glinting river, the roaring torrent, the irised waterfall, and the jeweled waves on the shore of a summer sea!

There is beauty in the flowing stream. The little rill begins its journey. Other streamlets unite with it, a brook is formed. It plashes and dances archly in its glee. It goes singing on its way. It trips on silver sandals. We remember Tennyson's exquisite lines:

"I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

"I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles;
I bubble into eddying bays;
I babble on the pebbles.

"I chatter, chatter as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever."

The brimming river into which the brook issues rolls its majestic tide ever toward the sea. On and on it sweeps, past meadow lands and harvest fields, past hamlets and cities. On it moves in storm and calm, in sunlight and starlight, in summer and winter; now gurling under ice, and now singing past flowers; but on, ever on to its rest in the sea, ever moving, like time, into eternity.

Winter also brings its revelation of beauty. The mantle of gleaming snow, the abundant clusters of ice crystals, the artistic work of the King of frosts give a glory to winter. The little brook bordered with a glazed and sparkling frost-work is not inferior in beauty to the brooklet when fringed with the most gorgeous flowers. Even skeleton weeds, when ice-incased and in the firm grip of crystal fetters, are radiant and resplendent.

Some years ago the writer witnessed a scene in Southwestern Wisconsin that still hangs as a

picture of rare beauty in the chamber of memory. It had sleeted almost all night, but toward morning some snow had fallen. When day was come I went out into the woods. Every branch and twig was cased in pure crystal. Some of the willows, and even sapling oaks, were bent into half-circles, having their tops frozen to the ground. Objects that in summer might have detracted from the beauty of the scene were now beautifully bedecked with crystal gems. When the sun arose and sent his piercing rays abroad, some of the most gorgeous arches, most splendid canopies, and grandest cathedrals were to be seen. The dazzling sunbeams piercing the ice-incased twigs, which were thickly clustered together, were transformed into the prismatic colors, and presented a most gorgeous scene. When it had become a little warmer I went out into the woods again, and I found that the twigs were being released from the firm grip of their icy fetters. The ice was falling in showers. There was music in the air, and one seemed to feel that nature was speaking to his soul.

The *flowers* furnish a wealth of beauty. Our

paths are strewn with them. They blossom for us by every wayside. The buttercup lifts its golden head into the light to catch the kiss of the sun. The rose opens its bloom and, behold an apocalypse of beauty! The pansy wakes to life and seems to all but speak. The violet is "a tatter of blue, torn from God's sky." With sunbeam pencils God paints the bluebell and the lily. A man with an eye open to nature's charm says, "The breeze blows on the flowers and rings the petal bells until they toll out their fragrance." Wordsworth sings:

> "To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

The *birds* are beautiful as they carol their matins about the golden windows of the morn. Agassiz found birds so attractive in his travels in the tropics that he called them "birds of Paradise." Beecher declares that his soul found its way to God, lifted by the song of a bird. When the songster pours forth his liquid notes, and makes the air quiver with melody, he does not know that he is thrilling your soul, but God knows. These living, "breathing gems,"

with hearts on fire, are messengers telling of our Father's care, and their melody should set the human soul to singing. He who loves beauty in the yellow of the canary, in the scarlet of the tannager, in the mottle of the lark, in the topaz of the humming bird, and in the iris of the dove will not forget His earthly child.

The *clouds* assume various forms of beauty. These navigators of the air have greatly influenced the race. Ruskin declares that the chief masters of the human imagination have confessed that they owe the force of their noblest thoughts not to the flowers of the valley, nor the majesty of the hill, but to the flying cloud. What variety of beauty in these floating messengers!

The *cirrus*, feathery, film-like, and silky, float in their far-off home fifty thousand feet above the earth. These ice needles, for such they are supposed to be, are yellow, pink, and scarlet, and float like filmy flakes of fire.

The *cumulus* go hurrying across the heavens on a summer day, and you see the flying shadow

on the earth. At times they appear like turrets, and towers, and castles, and domes, and bursting billows. They are amber, opal, and white, and at evening are often lined with silver or embroidered with gold.

The *stratus* are likened unto "leagued leviathans of the sea of heaven," and stretch from horizon to horizon, sometimes in bars of red or yellow, and sometimes with a leaden hue.

The *nimbus* brings the rain. They roll their ragged edges, their gray or purple front in the van of the storm. Tennyson gives us this vivid picture:

"Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt."

The clouds have fire in them, they encamp on hills, they rest on mountain slopes, or far away dream and sleep, or twist and swirl. They travel noiselessly, and scud like flocks, and show the rainbow on their bosoms. Ruskin says: "By the firmament of clouds the golden

pavement is spread for the sun's chariot wheels at morning; by the firmament of clouds the temple is built for his presence to fill with light at noon; by the firmament of clouds the purple veil is closed at evening round the sanctuary of his rest."

We all remember impressive moments when the ministry of nature in its revelations of beauty has enriched our lives. The writer remembers such an experience on Puget Sound. The sun was low in the west and was soon to say "good-night." To the east was Mount Baker with its crest bathed in crystal splendor. Far to the southeast loomed up the snow-browed peaks of the Cascades. To the south, one hundred miles away, we could yet see the frost-bannered summit of Mount Rainier. To the southwest were the rugged, jutting cliffs and splintered crests of the Olympics sharp against the sky. At our feet were the briny waters of the Sound, through which our vessel was plunging toward the open sea of the Pacific. The ripples on the summits of the waves, shot through with shafts of light, were like living, moving flakes of fire, and the shattered foam

from the wave-crests fell like showers of amethyst and pearl into the sea. The western firmament was a flood of golden glory, with bars of amber shooting across the mantling sky. The sun like a ball of fire sank into the ocean, and as we sailed out into the open sea "night let down her mantle and pinned it with a star."

Here is another scene that fades not with the passing years, but lingers as a benediction. One sweet May day we left the weird city of Pompeii to climb up to the crater of Vesuvius. After riding our ponies for a couple of hours we dismounted and scrambled on hands, feet, and knees up to the summit. Nearing the cone we saw the steam issuing from the crevices of the rocks. We could feel a slight tremor of the mountain. We could detect the sulphurous smoke. At last we stood upon the brink of the crater. The steam and smoke rolled up from its hot throat. Explosions at brief intervals sent stones into the air and made the mountain quake. The lava surging in the great caldron sounded like the swash of the sea. Retiring from the crater we stood upon a little pinnacle to look about us. The face of nature near by was seared with fire.

Here was where more than eighteen hundred years ago the light had melted out of the sky, and where dark and massy clouds had hung; where fiend-like flames had leaped from the volcano's crater, where rumbling sounds had echoed in the clefts of the rock, where vegetation had shriveled under the heated, foul, and vaporous air, and where the agents of terror and death had been omnipresent. This was the Mount that had been roused like a giant from the sleep of years and had rocked, and quivered, and reeled. Here fiery cataracts and demon floods had leaped onward. Here avalanches of fire had steamed, and smoked, and writhed, and had gone hissing into the sea. Here all the horrors of ghastly night and of more ghastly death had rushed on the noon. As we stood there that crystal summer day the mountain seemed covered with rigid corpses and resembled a "petrified creation." To the southeast we beheld the strange, weird ruins of Pompeii. A little beyond was Sorrento. More to the south was the charming little island of Capri with "sapphire gates." Full to the south was the peerless Bay of Naples flecked

with many a sail. To the westward was the city of Naples nestling by the sea, while behind us was Italy, the land of art, poetry, and song. Here is where "summer sings and never dies," a vision upon which the angels might wish to look.

The ministry of nature is seen in her revelations of *power*. Nature's processes of growth hint of power. The seed of a cedar is planted in the earth. It is instinct with life; it is packed with power. The winds whisper to it. Moisture softens its heart. It awakes. It thrills with life. Its vital energy bursts its enveloping shell. Its roots dive downward and seek for food. Its blade comes to the open day and breathes in power. It is tender and slender, but life is at its heart. It begins its battle. It is trampled upon. The winds cuff it. At the end of a decade it is a sappling. A century runs away and it is not mature. A thousand years roll by and it nears gianthood. There are Redwood trees in the Calaveras over six thousand years old. What empires they have seen rise and fall, what civilizations wax and wane! They tossed their kingly heads in the breeze before

Paul fought with Euroclydon on the deep. They wrestled with the storm before Alexander led his legions to victory, or the Athenians won their immortal triumph at Marathon. These mighty giants made music in the wind before David tuned his harp or blind Homer sang. For fifty centuries the winds of God have played upon their crests as great Æolian harps.

There is an exhibition of power in the stream that is first like a ribbon of silver in its mountain home. Later it becomes a hurrying torrent. By and by it leaps wildly from some mountain crag, and finally as a majestic river it rolls its multitudinous waters to their resting place in the sea. The tides speak of power as they throw their thundering billows on the beach. The thunderbolt gives its revelation of power when it leaps from the cloud and rives the oak, or hurls the temple to the dust. The sun speaks eloquently of power as he rises from his couch at morn, wakes the birds to singing, carpets the earth with grass and flowers, fills the fields with harvests, ushers in the seasons, and lifts three billion tons of water from the earth every minute, moves on in majesty across

the sky, and at eventide hastens to rest his weary head on the pillow of the western sea. The volcano is a herald of power as it pours from the earth's hot heart its lurid tides. The avalanche reveals power when it slips from its moorings on the mountain, and plunges with the rush and roar of a thousand storms to its rest in the valley below. Gravitation speaks of power as it drags rivers forever to the sea, pulls down trees, summons Niagaras to their plunge, forms tears, spheres planets, marshals glowing galaxies, and controls solar systems in their mighty swing through spacial abysses, all

> "Forever singing as they shine,
> The Hand that made us is divine."

Nature ministers to us in revealing the *Sublime*. The *ocean* is sublime. It is the abode of mystery and of storms. The silence of its depths seems kindred to the silence of the skies. How gentle is the calm of a silent summer sea! What power and majesty in the crystal cliffs and crashing billows of a tumultuous ocean! Its moods are many. It thunders,

booms, sings an anthem, surges, sobs. Byron sang of its sublimity:

"Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze or gale or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark heaving;—boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee: thou goest forth, dread, fathomless,
alone."

The sea often stirs the heart of man. The vision of the sea often helps him to give expression to the thought that is burning at his heart. He likens his life to a voyage upon the sea: and he sings and prays:

"Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;
Chart and compass came from Thee;
Jesus, Savior, pilot me."

The ocean is to man an emblem of the love of God, and he sings:

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea."

Man thinks of his departure to the Home of the Blest like embarking on the sea:

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea."

The sight of the sea often lifts the soul heavenward. It transports man into a high and holy realm of thought, and the heart climbs up to commune with God.

"I dream of the sea, I dream of the sea.
Its swishing waves make music for me,
Its pulsing waters beat in my blood,
My heart knows the movement of neap-tide and flood.
Its mist-veiled horizons challenge me
To belief in God and eternity:
My spirit grows bold in the ambient air;
O'er the heaving billows I lift up a prayer.
Far from dust of the street and prattle of men,
I read here the Scripture not written with pen:
'Deep calleth to deep' in the mystery
Of the sky and the soul and the sea."

River cañons furnish visions of sublimity. The Grand Cañon of the Colorado River in Arizona is overwhelmingly sublime. You may

as well attempt to paint the heavens as to describe the Grand Cañon. With a few friends I went down this cañon one day. We followed the zigzag path descending five thousand feet and stood on the brink fifteen hundred feet above the roaring flood. The Grand Cañon is a labyrinth of cañons. Standing there we swept the circle of vision and counted nine great facades that rose a mile high. They made a mammoth amphitheater. After a little computation we found that you could comfortably seat over two hundred million people here. On one of these great walls you could seat the millions of England, on another the millions of France, on another the millions of Germany, on another the millions of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, on another the millions of Turkey, Switzerland, Greece, Holland, and Belgium, and on the remaining the millions of Uncle Sam's children. So if these nations wanted to hold an International Congress, and have all present, we could furnish the amphitheater.

Those walls rise before you higher than thirty Bunker Hill Monuments, higher than

twenty Ferris Wheels, higher than five Eiffel Towers, higher than fifty tall church spires. And yonder, fifteen hundred feet below where you stand, is the rushing, roaring river hurrying on fifteen miles per hour toward the sea.

In these limestone, sandstone, and volcanic rocks and marble there is, by means of the play of light and shadow, a kaleidoscopic variety of beauty. The domes, castles, pinnacles, spires, towers, turrets, minarets, barricades, and battlements are painted in such variety of hue by the sunbeam pencils that this stupendous panorama impresses you as the scenic wonder of the world. Here is a façade shining forth under the glow of the direct rays of the sun. The rocks are of yellow and roseate hue, of opal richness, and saffron glory. Over there is a stony front in the shadow and with softer colors. Yonder is one in deeper shade, and mists of amethyst seem rising out of the Tartarean depths. These majestic cliffs of stone, these tinted walls and glowing rocks, these purpling shadows, these mysterious caverns, these silent, somber solitudes all make this scene colossal,

sublime, awful, overwhelming, and finite man seems so small and Infinite God so great.

Mountains are sublime. A great mountain often has a somber hue. There are deep gulches and rents and glens into which the direct rays of the sun never shine. The "arrowy pines" on their slopes play their vesper hymns at the time of the "sunset breeze," and these mingle with the litany of the cascades. Save these sounds the silent slopes seem full of slumber. Their craggy cliffs, hewn with celestial chisels, are rugged with mystery. On their summits mists dream and sleep, or float like incense up to God. They are the abodes of tempests, the homes of avalanches, the mothers of rivers and climates. Your eye sweeps up the shaggy slope to where only shrubs are clinging to their rough and rugged home. Upward you gaze to those shivering peaks, to those splintering spires, to those cloud-bannered summits, to those cliffs with snowy helmets.

The mountain's base may have its moss and tree and heather and singing bird. The slope may have its somber shade, purple rocks, and leaping cataract, but the summit finds a

home amid the battlements of eternal frost. Summer never smiles on that immaculate brow. The Winter King reigns there alone. The mountain is a symbol of power, an emblem of eternity, an altar for humanity, a shadow of Divinity. It is one of God's pictures hung out against the firmament.

There is an impressive sublimity in the *sky*. The devout astronomer saw in the wheeling galaxies the thoughts of God. Agassiz at Penikese was solemnized to prayer by the vision of the silent sky and plain. The philosopher declared that one of the scenes of moving majesty was the starry heavens at night. One characterizes the sky as "sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity."

How the sky speaks of immensity! Stars were once thought to be "tiny balls of light," but now we see them as majestic worlds with their quenchless fires. Telescope and spectroscope have changed our conceptions of the celestial mechanics. Far-away nebulæ have

broken into glittering clusters of worlds. We see the glowing furnaces; it is God who feeds their fires. We behold the sweeping chariots; it is God who holds the reins.

Two thousand years ago Hipparchus called the number of stars one thousand and twenty-two. Ptolemy, of the second century of the Christian era, found one thousand and twenty-six. Could we view the entire heavens we could see but a few thousand stars with the naked eye. But the telescope came, and by means of this powerful instrument almost four hundred millions of stars may be seen. This instrument lifts the veil from countless worlds and makes the Milky Way burst into clusters of separate stars.

Dr. Schauffler tells how the professor of astronomy in Columbia University while lecturing on Stellar Photography threw on the screen four pictures of the same nebula with the surrounding stellar companions. The first picture was taken by an exposure of three minutes. The nebula was faint and here and there a star appeared. The next picture was the result of a three hour exposure. The nebula was much

clearer, and there were a few more stars. The third picture was the outcome of an eight hour exposure, on two consecutive nights. The nebula was more brilliant and the stars more abundant. The fourth picture was gotten by an exposure for six nights, in all twenty-five hours, and when the audience saw it they broke into applause. "The nebula was glorious and the stars hosts on hosts." The professor added: "Gentlemen, you are now seeing what the naked eye, with the assistance of the most powerful telescope in the world, never will see; for the eye never can hold itself steadily to the image for twenty-five consecutive hours."

Man's imagination grows weary when he tries to swing across the abyss of space. Schiller says:

"Thou sail'st in vain—Return. Before thy path Infinity!
And thou in vain! Behind me spreads Infinity to Thee!
Fold thy wings drooping,
O Thought, eagle-swooping!—
O Phantasie, anchor!—Thy voyage is o'er:
Creation, wild sailor, flows on to no shore!"

We look up into those vast silences. What a profound hush in those depths jeweled with

star-gems! How impressive the "stillness of the eternal chambers!"

"One sun by day, by night ten thousand shine,
And light us deep into the Deity:
How boundless in magnificence and might!
O what a confluence of ethereal fires,
From urns unnumbered, down the steep of heav'n,
Streams to a point, and centers in my sight!
Nor tarries there; I feel it at my heart,
My heart, at once, it humbles and exalts;
Lays it in the dust, and calls it to the skies."

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Music has had an important place in the advancement of civilization. If

> "The meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears,"

what shall we say of the inspirational power of music's melody?

Music stirs the heart of man. It arouses the patriot to heroic action, quickens the pulse of the lover, thrills the soul of the freeman as he strikes for liberty, and expands the heart of the worshiper.

Music is declared to be the most perfect medium for the expression of emotion. One of the oldest books of the world tells us that at creation "the morning stars sang together." This corresponds with Plato's theory of "the music of the spheres." Dryden has suggested that music will untune the sky:

> "As from the power of sacred lays
> The spheres began to move,
> And sung the great Creator's praise
> To all the blest above:

So, when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And music shall untune the sky."

The origin of music is beyond the dawn of history. No one knows just when it began. All peoples have at least the rudiments of music. Primitive tribes may be shut off from the rest of the world, yet music is among them.

All grades and classes of people enjoy music. It has been said that when God saw how many of His earthly children dwelt in houses to which had not yet come gold, or painting, or sculpture, or poetry, that the Creator, having given to the mind the genius that could paint and carve and build, at last said, "I shall now create an art for the whole people—an art for city and country, for palace or hut, for the vast assembly or the single, lonely heart—I shall give the mind music."

Music is used on all occasions. It has a place in the private circle, in the public gathering, at the theater, at the church, in sorrow and in joy, at birth, at marriage, and at funeral.

The housewife sings at her daily toil, the shepherd sings to his flock. Mythology says that Bacchus was never happy unless within the sound of Pan's sweet flute. King Saul was recovered from his melancholy by the melody that dripped from David's harp. Philip V of Spain was rescued from mental disaster by the famous musician, Farinelli, who was brought from Naples to charm away the despondency of the king. When Luther was discouraged he would say, "Come, and let us sing a Psalm of praise and drive away the devil."

There is marshaling power in music. Some one has said that Moses would have reached Canaan if Miriam had kept Israel singing. It is related that in the Middle Ages Prince Conrad led out his forces against Charles I of Sicily, with a female choir, singing, accompanied by cymbals, drums, flutes, and violins. The singing of the Garibaldi hymn helped to set modern Italy free. Music hastened the dawn of Italian liberty. The youth marched to the deliverance of their native land under the awakening touch of martial melody. The musicians were forbidden to play a certain

Swiss air in the French army, for fear that the Swiss soldiers would desert the army and go home. In our Civil War there was a regiment of Christians, who, every time they went into battle, sang, "We're going home to die no more." They were nicknamed "The Die-No-Mores." The tide of battle has been turned in many a conflict by the singing of a hymn or the beating of a drum.

We come now to sacred music. The function of sacred music is "to stimulate and express devotion." Music is called "the love language of the soul." Bach said, "One of the noblest objects of music is the spread of religion and the elevation of the human soul." Another says, "Religion as an organized thing and as worship could not exist without it (music). When song dies out where men assemble for worship, the doors are soon closed." Music and devotion go together. The poet knew this who said:

"Devotion borrows music's tone,
And music takes devotion's wing;
And, like the bird that hails the sun,
They soar to heaven, and soaring, sing."

Homer sang to the gods. Indians have a rough chant when they perform their sacred rites. The Indian yells and beats his tom-tom. The combination is such as to drive the cultured musician mad, but it pleases, if it does not always soothe, the savage breast. The ancient Muses were mostly employed in the service of the gods.

Music had an important place in worship among the Hebrews. When Solomon had the Ark of the Covenant brought to the temple prepared for it, and the Levites had put the Ark in its place, it was while the company of musicians, arrayed in white linen, sounded the trumpets, beat the cymbals, and sang, that the glory of the Lord filled the temple. When the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom went to consult Elisha, the prophet, for God's message, Elisha called for a minstrel, and while the minstrel played the hand of the Lord was upon the prophet and he delivered his message. When the Ten Commandments were given at Sinai the Israelites not only saw the smoke and the lightning, but they heard the noise of the trumpet. When David insti-

tuted the imposing, stately services on Mount Zion he selected four thousand singers who composed the tabernacle choirs. When he brought the Ark from Kirjath-jearim to the holy city, companies of singers marched and sang, and David marched and played on his harp. Timbrels, trumpets, and cymbals sounded.

Music has held a prominent place in the Christian age. At the birth of Jesus angelic choirs broke the silence of the skies with a sweet celestial chime. The last night that Jesus was with His disciples before His suffering on the cross they sang a hymn together. Pagan historians refer to the singing of the early Christians. Augustine speaks of the singing of the Christians at the Milan Church in these noble words: "How I wept, O Lord, deeply touched by the hymns and songs of praise as uttered by the voices of Thy sweetly singing congregations! The voices flowed in at my ears, truth was distilled in my heart, and the affection of piety overflowed in sweet tears of joy."

The word "Lollard" is said to be derived from "lullen," to sing. The Lollards found in

hymn tunes and chants a medium for the expression of their religious devotion. In Luther's day the Protestants sang their doctrines into the hearts of the people. Luther called music "the transfigured daughter of heaven." The Puritans were greatly influenced by the singing of the Psalms. The great awakening under the Wesleys had the poet-preacher, Charles Wesley, whose hymns greatly accelerated the mighty revival of the eighteenth century. The Salvation Army wins much by its hearty, enthusiastic singing. All great religious movements have been intensified by music.

There is mysterious power in music's melody. Carlyle calls it "a kind of articulate, unfathomable speech that leads us to the edge of the infinite and lets us gaze into that." Tennyson says, "It often seems to me that music must take up expression at the point where poetry leaves off and expresses what can not be expressed in words." Richter exclaimed, "O music, thou who bringest the receding waves of eternity nearer to the weary heart of man as he stands upon the shores and longs to cross over; art thou the evening breeze of this life

or the morning air of the future one?" A yearning soul asks of music, "Art thou a recollection of Paradise or a foretaste of Heaven?"

We may now ask concerning the function of music in the church service. We will be helped in our estimate if we remember the true aim of sacred music, which is said to be "to stimulate and express devotion." Music seems to furnish a language for the soul. How it sobs and rejoices, pleads for mercy and rises on exultant wing!

Some folks have the unworthy conception that church music is to break the monotony of the service or to entertain or to attract an audience, or is a sort of concession by the pastor so that the rest of the people may have something to do. But instead of all this we should recognize that music is an integral part of worship. It arouses religious sentiment, it calls the heart to praise, it excites reflection, it weds thought to harmony and carries the soul Godward.

Many of our tunes and much of our best music were composed amid great spiritual fervency, and we should sing them with a spir-

itual understanding. They have a message for the heart. Jenny Lind could ravish the hearts of her listeners because a divine melody was whispering to her soul. When Ole Bull was asked by his king where he got such sweet notes as swept from his violin, he replied, "I caught them, Your Majesty, in the mountains of Norway." God had spoken to his heart through creation. God having spoken to him he could make his violin speak to others. Beethoven heard silent music in the fields and valleys, and that divine inner music gave pathos and power to his executions. Handel was told by his sovereign that the "Messiah" oratorio afforded him great pleasure. Handel's reply hints at the correct estimate of all sacred music. He said to the emperor, "Your Majesty, I did not intend to arouse or to afford pleasure; I meant to make the world better." When Handel wrote the passage in the "Messiah," "He was despised and rejected," he wept. When he composed the "Hallelujah Chorus," he says that he thought he saw the heavens open with the angels standing about the Throne.

The church choir has a sacred task. Israel's

king of old "appointed singers unto the Lord, who should praise the beauty of holiness." The tabernacle choirs of David's day were to sing to the glory of God. Paul gives us the mission of sacred song. He tells us what and how to sing: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." According to the apostle the aim of sacred music is not pleasure and entertainment, but instruction and edification. This does not belittle or cheapen the work of the choir. It exalts and glorifies it. The service the choir renders is holy and should be greatly appreciated.

It requires time and grace to sing in a church choir. Sacrifices have to be made to attend choir rehearsal. But the path of choirs has not always been smooth. It is related that in 1779 at Worcester a public meeting decided that the singers must sit in the rear seats on the men's side, and the mode of singing should be without reading line by line. The following Sunday Deacon Chamberlain arose to fulfill his

time-honored duty of lining the Psalms, but the singers made no pause. Still Deacon Chamberlain read on, till overpowered, he took his hat, and with tears in his eyes retired. In his book "Culture and Music," Carl Merz says this was the first organization of a choir in this country, and it started in a fight. The choir is sometimes called "the war department of the Church." All these things may serve as an occasion of merriment, but when we speak sanely and seriously there should be only praise and most hearty appreciation for those who use their God-given talent and their trained ability to advance the interests of the music of the sanctuary.

Church music is not complete without the organ. Not long ago the pipe organ was called the instrument of the devil and the Pope. A pipe organ was bought by a Church in one of our Eastern States and was not unpacked for nine months because of the opposition to its installment in the church. Yet the organ, above all others, is the instrument of sacred music. Bushnell said, "The organ is the instrument of God; grandest of all instruments, it is,

as it should be, the instrument of religion. Profane uses can not handle it. It will not go to battle nor the dance nor the serenade, for it is the holy Nazarite and can not leave the courts of the Lord."

The organist is not to be forgotten. The organ, under the deft and trained touch of the consecrated player, is to sound out the praises of God, and tune our hearts for worship and praise. We were glad to note a few months ago a published announcement from the American Guild of Organists. It reads as follows:

"For the greater glory of God, and for the good of His Holy Church in this land, we, being severally members of the American Guild of Organists, do declare our mind and intention in the things following:

"We believe that the office of music in Christian worship is a sacred oblation before the Most High.

"We believe that they who are set as choirmasters and as organists in the house of God ought themselves to be persons of devout conduct, teaching the ways of earnestness in the choirs committed to their charge.

"We believe that the unity of purpose and fellowship of life between ministers and choirs should be everywhere established and maintained. We believe that at all times and in all places it is meet, right, and our bounden duty to work and to pray for the advancement of Chris-

tian worship in the holy gifts of strength and nobleness; to the end that the Church may be purged of her blemishes, that the minds of men may be instructed, that the honor of God's house may be guarded in our time and in the time to come.

"*Wherefore*, we do give ourselves with reverence and humility to these endeavors, offering up our works and our persons in the name of Him without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy."

Music is often an effective way of bringing the gospel message to the human heart. A few years ago I heard a professor of a theological seminary in Chicago relate the following incident: A Norwegian boy went to South Dakota to the town of Pierre. He was far from home and very lonely. One Sunday morning he was walking by a church. The door was open. He went in. He could not speak our language. He knew no one. By and by the congregation began to sing. He knew the tune and what it said in the Norwegian language. It was, "What a Friend we have in Jesus!" It touched his heart. That afternoon he walked out under the cottonwood trees by the Missouri River and there gave his heart to God. He soon entered the Dakota University. Later he went to

Beloit College. Still later he entered the Chicago Theological Seminary, and at graduation stood at the head of his class. That hymn led that man to Christ. There is a ministry in music.

Sacred melody has a sacred ministry; therefore sing the gospel. Sing it to the wicked man and let it mellow his nature; sing it to the man of seared conscience and let it melt his heart of stone; sing it to the despairing man and let it flash a gleam of hope into the midnight of his soul; sing it to the unhappy man and let it make the sun of joy burst from the riven cloud; sing it to the storm-tossed man, tempest-driven, and let it bring a calm and holy hush to his heart; sing it to the prodigal and let it remind him of "the tender grace of a day that is dead;" sing it to the lost man and let the music of the gospel melody sweep the delicate harp of the soul and bring the man to God; sing it until you shall join the celestial choirs of the immortals, for music has a place in heaven.

THE MINISTRY OF STRUGGLE AND TEARS

THE MINISTRY OF STRUGGLE AND TEARS

THE path that leads to coronation is not always strewn with flowers. The way to kingship is not up a shining slope of ease. The road to a scepter and a crown has thorns and blood. The philosophy of life that takes no account of trouble and adversity is false to facts.

We look out upon the fair face of nature and we see bursting flowers, murmuring brooks, bending trees, verdant meadow-lands, lofty hills, majestic mountains, glinting rivers, shimmering seas, and overarching sky; but all this glory has come up through uncounted æons of strife, and struggle, and shock.

In the dim and distant ages the earth was a molten ball. Later we have the cooling mass with heart of fire. In the roll of ages seas form and rocks harden, and after untold millenniums the earth is ready for flower and herb, and finally for man.

Standing in volcanic regions you see how

the rocks are twisted and distorted, indicating that giants have been at work. They look as though they had writhed in agony as they came through their red-hot baths. Fire, flood, and frost have all played their part.

The law of struggle is seen in the life of a tree. Here is a forest monarch whose fiber is packed with strength. It is worthy to become a part of Solomon's Temple, helping grace Mount Zion, and adorning the capital city of God's chosen people. You look at this sinewy giant. Where did its roots find anchorage? Where did it lift its head to catch the dews of heaven? Was it in some quiet vale? Was it in some hidden and sequestered glen where no storms ever beat, where no blasts could twist and wrench it, where no combat ever comes? No! It grew out yonder on the mountains of Lebanon, where it must wrestle with the winds of God as the Syrian storms swept over it in their majesty and fury. It was made strong through struggle.

One spring day I picked up a young robin in the yard. It trembled and quivered as I held it. I let it go and down to the earth it quickly

fell. It hopped along the ground and after a few seconds stood panting. How hard it was to learn to fly! The parent birds came coaxing the little one to further effort, until it ventured again and again. From some small perch it would try its wings and go fluttering to the ground. But it gained in the power of flight from day to day, and soon was free to go at will among the branches. It was victory through struggle.

The story is told of a lad who one day found a chrysalis of a beautiful butterfly. He took it home and watched its development. Seeing that a struggle was going on in the chrysalis he determined to lend his aid, and with his help the creature did in five minutes what alone it could have done in an hour. But when the butterfly took wing, instead of gliding gladly away, it went a little distance, fell fluttering to the ground, and died. The hour-long struggle which the boy saved the creature was necessary for its life.

The same law is operative in man. Here is one who has great muscular power. He can break coins with his fingers, he can snap leather

straps by the swelling of his muscles and by the expansion of his chest. Where did he grow? Was it in some home of luxury? Was it without exercise? No! There had been struggle and discipline in his life.

Consider man's intellectual power. Here is a person of mental grasp and vigor. He can wrestle with perplexing problems and trace the subtleties of thought. His mind is under perfect command. He can marshal his powers and force them to a focus. He can center them upon a point of application. He has a mental grasp and an intellectual sweep that make him a giant. How came he to have such power, such control, such mastery? Was it by ease? by idleness? No! It was by toil, by application, by discipline, by struggle.

See how struggle crowned Demosthenes. He was a timid stammerer at first. By the shore of the roaring sea he put pebbles in his mouth and spoke his stammering words to the ocean waves. He struggled on. One day a surging throng gathers at Athens. The masses of Athenian democracy were there. The man who had sounded forth his words while the

ocean sang its anthem in his ears mounts the rostrum. With vivid speech, with orator's art, with lofty imagination, and with heart of fire he plays upon the emotions of that mighty throng. Never did their native country seem so dear, never did the mountains of Attica seem so lofty and summitless; never did the waves break with such music on their classic shores; never did the pages of their history glow with such deeds of valor; never did the past seem so bright, or the future of a faithful democracy so flattering; never did liberty seem so fair, so immortal; nor tyranny so fiendish, so Satanic. He pours out the flood-tide of his patriotic devotion. The multitude sways before his impelling power like a forest in the grip of a tempest. They are moved, aroused, thrilled, until, amid the orator's rapturous flights they cry, "Lead us against Philip." Struggle made Demosthenes thus strong for triumph.

The giants of earth are not children of fortune; they are the children of struggle, and through struggle they become children of victory. If we had our way we would have the spiritual life grow as a flower in some quiet

vale and sheltered bower. We would have our craft sail forever upon a quiet and stormless sea, where waves never surge, where lightnings never smite, where thunders never crash. We would "go to the skies on flowery beds of ease." We would "sing ourselves away to everlasting bliss." We would have no floods to face, no foes to fight. But infinite wisdom has planned otherwise.

The old proverb is true: "A calm sea never made a skillful mariner." A sheltered life never became morally mighty. The ore must pass through the furnace to come out steel. Statues of grace and beauty do not leap from the block of marble by soothing touches. Clay must enter the fire before it turns out the priceless porcelain. Ghiberti spent twenty years in beating into beauty the scenes upon the bronze doors of the Baptistry of the Duomo in Florence. God spends fifty years in fashioning a human life into grace and beauty upon the anvil of trial and adversity. The man who meets the discipline of trial grows strong and kingly. The trumpets of God forever herald the truth that man must battle for his crown. Canaan

became an actual possession of Israel after hard fighting and heroic effort. The promised land of the Christian is won by conquest only. Froude says, "You can not dream yourself into character; you must hammer and forge yourself into one."

The purest, serenest, and most radiant souls have gone the way of sorrow, of trial, and of suffering. Through a divine alchemy, which we do not always understand, man's life is refined, and the disciple, like his Lord, is "made perfect through suffering." "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne."

"If we suffer we shall also reign." The one who has spent all his energy and power in the overthrow of a giant wrong rejoices more in the victory that comes than he who never sacrifices. He who grasped the sword, and seized the gun and rushed to the assault on the field of blood that slavery might die and then came "staggering from the fight" can enjoy the music of falling chains vastly more than he who stayed at home

when his country called for men. The soldier who stood with Washington amid the sufferings of Valley Forge could feel the thrill of rapturous delight sweep through his soul at the surrender of Cornwallis, while he who failed to fight for freedom was bereft of joy. So the Christian who suffers with Christ, who goes with Him in sorrow, with Him in poverty, with Him where thorns are thick and roses rare, with Him to a garden of agony, with Him to sacrifice, can catch strains of heavenly music, and have in his heart melodies of the divine, while the man who knows not the "fellowship of Christ's sufferings" is joyless and crownless. The man who suffers with Christ is on his way to that Land of Beulah which Bunyan's Pilgrim saw, "Where the sun shines night and day, the land lying beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and out of the reach of Giant Despair, and from which one can not so much as see Doubting Castle, where they renew their marriage contract with their God and have no want of corn and wine." And in that

"Land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,"

it shall be said of those who suffer with Christ: "These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the Throne." "If we suffer we shall also reign."

There is a philosophy of human affliction that has comfort and cheer. Through our tears we may see God's rainbow. Matheson says, "My tears have *made* my rainbow." Afflictions are not to be sought. They are not to be self-inflicted, but they may become the occasion of refinement and of the sweetening of character. They may be "a savor of life unto life," or of "death unto death." There is a harvest to affliction's sowing. The thorny branches of affliction bear roses. Crucifixions bring coronations. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

When the bloom of health is on the cheek, when prosperity hangs like luscious fruit on the bows of life's tree, when fortune smiles and beckons to the heights of fame and power, men are prone to forget God. How selfish, how

hard, how cold, how callous and indifferent men would become were pain and death removed! We may well sing:

"Blest be the tempest, kind the storm
Which drives us nearer home."

Michelet* tells us that in the hot countries the furious insects which attack the wild cattle in reality save their lives by driving them to the highlands. The flocks and herds become sickly in the swampy, feverish lowlands, when, trembling and bleeding, they fly from their stinging persecutors to the fresh air and living waters of the hills, where their tormentors leave them. Thus our troubles and afflictions drive us from the atmosphere that chokes, and smothers, and murders the finer impulses of the soul and we seek help and refuge in the secret place of the Most High.

There is a refining process at work in affliction. It is David the persecuted and hunted who can sing his immortal Shepherd Psalm. Like other poets he "Learned in suffering what he taught in song." Goethe declared that he never had a great sorrow out of which he did

* Used by W. L. Watkinson, "Education of the Heart," p. 233.

not get a poem. It was from the shadows of a Bedford jail that came Bunyan's immortal Allegory. Dante, who is called the voice of ten silent centuries, wandered a broken-hearted exile through many years. Sad and lonely he walked the streets among strangers. The children would point their fingers at him and say, "There goes the man who has been in hell." Out of his own fiery pains and burning agonies he wrote his immortal stories. Out from the riven heart of Tennyson flowed that pure stream, that matchless threnody, "In Memoriam." Here the sobs of a broken heart are set to music. Tennyson's poetry, as well as his life, was transfigured by a great sorrow.

Goldschmidt went to hear Jenny Lind sing. He was asked how he liked her singing. He replied, "Fair. But if I could marry her and break her heart she would sing better." It transpired that he did marry her, and he did break her heart, and she did sing better. There was a new touch of pathos and power in her singing after her sorrow that brought the world to her feet.

One day a great sorrow came into the ex-

perience of George Matheson, the illustrious blind preacher of Scotland. A bitter disappointment swept his soul and tested the fiber of his life. But how often it is that amid pain and suffering man gets his loftiest visions! So in his anguish and misfortune, George Matheson saw a Pity that never fails, and a Love that never dies, and his heartache became the mother of a wondrous song. In the burning agony of that crucial hour when the bitter cup was pressed to his lips, he wrote that immortal hymn:

"O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

"O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee,
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

"O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I can not close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

"O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust, life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

Jesus can live with us in the storm and can lift us to catch visions above the storm. I remember traveling in Italy one day when our train began the ascent of one of the lower ranges of the Italian Alps. As the train climbed up the mountain it plunged into a thunderstorm. The clouds were all about us. The thunder crashed as if beneath us at times. On sped the train up the slope, when suddenly it dashed out of the storm and cloud, and plunged us into the glory of the clear sunlight. We had gotten above the clouds. Yonder on the plain the storm was sweeping onward, but we were bathed in the splendors of the full-orbed day. The glorious sunshine was about us. The man who has no Christian faith lives in the storm with no vision of the sun, while the Christian often rises above the storm, and stands on the Mount of God "where the golden sunlight gleams."

It is recorded that when the Roman Emperor threatened Chrysostom with banishment the prophet of righteousness replied, "Thou canst not, for the world is my Father's house; thou canst not banish me." Then said the Emperor, "But I will slay thee." Thereupon Chrysostom answered, "Nay, but thou canst not, for my life is hid with Christ in God." Then said the ruler, "I will take thy treasures." But the faithful soul replied, "Nay, but thou canst not; for in the first place I have none that thou knowest of. My treasure is in heaven and my heart is there." Then the enraged Roman continued, "But I will drive thee away from man, and thou shalt have no friend left." At once the grand old hero said, "Nay, and that thou canst not; for I have a Friend in heaven from whom thou canst not separate me. I defy thee. There is nothing thou canst do to hurt me." Thus Jesus can enable us to stand when the jeers and taunts of an ungodly world ring in our ears, when people sneer and the lip curls in scorn, when the multitude hates and hisses, when accused of crimes we never did, when maligned by an infernal foe, when the

swelling flood of temptation rises and rolls against us, when the hot breath of passion sweeps the soul, when the tide of sorrow beats pitilessly on the shores of being, when the sword of anger gleams and the shout of the foe rings in our ears, when the whirlwind and tempest rage, even then Jesus can enable us to stand like the tree deep-rooted in the soil, like the granite that is anchored in the hills, like the rock against which the ocean breakers beat in vain.

The forest monarch was made strong and sinewy through overcoming the wrestling elements, not by yielding to them. The tree that bends to the wind without resisting, rebounding power must forever bow its head in weakness. When the storms of life smite the soul, if man is firmly rooted in the promises of God, he can remain tranquil in the tempest knowing that his interests are safe. As the first blast of grief sweeps his soul he quickly rebounds in the strength and confidence of a faith which remembers the word of assurance: "The everlasting God is thy refuge." "Fear thou not, for I am with thee." Our Lord is more than a match for your trouble. He says to you as

He said to the frightened disciples on the sea of Galilee, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith!" "Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." When our lives are "hid with Christ in God" He can rebuke the storms, saying, "Peace, be still," and there will be tranquillity and rest.

The believing soul is at peace because it rests upon the promises of the God of infinite wisdom and of infinite goodness, who says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." By faith we may grasp what we ask and enjoy it even now, for "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen."

Man must not bend in misery and sorrow, but by faith overcome his mourning. The Master said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Also, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." "Only believe." Over and over again our Lord exhorted people to believe. Whether the trouble be sin, or sickness, or death, His remedy is, "Only believe." No matter what your trouble is, Christ can satisfy

your desire. "Trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass." "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." But the faith must not break in the storm. It must stand firmly anchored in the promises, no matter how long the fury of the blast remains unspent, for the God of infinite love and power will not fail you even when promise and experience seem to conflict.

A crown is quite the opposite of a cross. Yet a crown is always the result of a cross overcome. When a cross weighs upon you, "only believe" and Christ will transform it into a crown. He can make any trouble the opposite of what it appears to be. "If a son ask bread, will He give him a stone?"

"Take courage to intrust your love
To Him so named, who guards above
Its ends, and shall fulfill!
Breaking the narrow prayers that may
Befit your narrow hearts away
In His broad, loving will."*

*Mrs. Browning in "Isobel's Child."

Despondency fastens its iron hooks in man's heart and would drag him down to the doors of despair, but God gives man the angel of hope to coax him back to the heights of light and cheer. Sorrow surges in man's heart like a troubled sea, but God gives "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The pulse of man's ambition beats low, but God gives new visions and points out new golden summits, and baptizes our hearts with new inspiration. Defeat tries to wrap its iron chains about man and bind him in a remorseless captivity, but God causes the harbinger of victory to sing in his soul. Man stands by a sick bedside and sees the light fade out of the eyes, and feels the pulse of a loved one grow still. He looks into an empty cradle and upon a newly-made grave, but God pours the balsam of an immortal gospel upon the bleeding heart. Man must go down into the valley of shadow until he can hear the flutter of the death-angel's wing, but the Father gives him the staff of His comfort and the rod of His power while he waits for the chariot of God. Man sees that this

life is but a "vapor," "a breath," "a hand-breadth," "a shadow," "a flower," "a sleep," "a dream," but God gives him an eternal career up the heights, an unending progress toward a summitless destiny that finds its sanctuary and home in the bosom of the Eternal. Man lives amid storms, and sorrows, and tears, but God gives Heaven, the stormless, sorrowless, tearless, deathless, nightless world with its holy fellowships, where dwell the general assembly and Church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect,* who are without fault before the throne of God.† Resting in this faith man may say at the close of each day:

"The day is ended; ere I sink to sleep
My weary spirit seeks repose in Thine;
Father, forgive my trespasses and keep
This little life of mine.

"With loving kindness curtain Thou my bed,
And cool in rest my burning pilgrim feet;
Thy pardon be the pillow for my head,
So shall my sleep be sweet.

"At peace with all the world, dear Lord, and Thee,
No foes my soul's unwavering faith can shake.
All 's well whichever side the grave for me
The morning light may break."

*Hebrews 12:23. †Revelation 14:5.

When mountain climbing I have often picked flowers that bloomed in beauty and sweetness not far from the home of snow and frost. What delicacy of tint and shade, what sweet and subtle perfume, what elegance of grace and form, what tender charm they possessed! Their delicate whiteness resembled the snow near which they bloomed; their tints of violet were like the blue from out the sky. So nigh to snow, and ice, and blizzard, so near to the home of eternal frost, so close to the domain of the Winter King do these plants of nature bloom! And how often do human plants, growing amid the rigor of moral strife and storm, where the blasts of winter smite, and where moral blizzards blow, bloom in beauty, blossom to perfection, and become meet to adorn the palace of the King.

Life has been called "part a song and part a sob; half *jubilante* and half *miserere*." It is said that it is never far from a smile to a tear. Because the ancient ceremonial worship consisted of two parts, the offering of sacrifices and the service of song, Dr. Vance calls it "the gospel of the altar and the choir." He

calls attention as to how Jesus bound together these ideas of sacrifice and song in the Beatitudes. "Blessed are they that mourn;" that is the altar—"for they shall be comforted"—that is the choir. "Blessed are the meek"—that is the sacrifice—"for they shall inherit the earth"—that is the song. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake"—that is the altar. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"—that is the celestial choir. Thus "The symbol of the gospel is a cross; but not a cross by itself; not a lone, bare, gaunt, naked cross. The symbol of the gospel is a crown; but not a crown by itself; not a proud, cold, despotic, selfish, pitiless crown. The symbol of the gospel is a cross and a crown; a cross lying in a crown; a crown growing around a cross; a cross haloed by a crown; a crown won by a cross."*

We are not orphans, we are not waifs, we are not pieces of driftwood floating aimlessly

*"Tendency," Vance, p. 207.

upon the high seas of life. The cry of wrestling Jacob, "Tell me Thy name," was answered by Jesus when He taught us to say, "Our Father." The yearning of the Hebrew heart, "O that I knew where I might find Him! My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God," finds sacred answer in the Incarnation. Browning saw this and wrote:

"'T is the weakness in strength that I cry for! My flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like to my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever! a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee. See the Christ stand!"

Augustine speaks for the race when he says, "Man can not rest until he rests in God." Man wants to creep into the Divine Heart. He wants to know not only the power of God, but also to feel the nearness of God. Only the conviction that he is the object of God's thought and care can give rest and peace. This conviction

Christ has wrought in the heart of the race, and the Christian poet sings:

"Yet in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!

"And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I can not drift
Beyond His love and care.

"And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee!"*

A man went into a store in New York City and asked the proprietor for some tumblers tuned to the key of C. The proprietor responded, "I am no musician. There are thousands of tumblers here, but I do not know whether any of them are tuned to the key of C

*"Eternal Goodness," Whittier.

or not." "I will attend to that," replied the other, and he took a tuning fork out of his pocket and struck it, and every tumbler among the thousands that was tuned to the key of C leaped into music. Let our hearts be keyed into harmony with God, and then, whatever the providences of His grace for our lives, they will leap into responsive vibration, and life will be full of music.

He who knows all calamities, and all accidents, and all bereavements dares to say, "All things work together for good to those who love God." Out from the gateway of eternity the Savior speaks, saying: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Death is called the key that opens the palace of eternity. Tennyson, thinking of Hallam, his friend, who had been drowned at sea, calls him

"That friend of mine who lives in God."

Drummond suggests that death is not so much "sunset" as "sunrise," not so much "departure" as "arrival." Dying Frances Willard exclaimed, "How beautiful it is to be with God!" For the Christian one declares that "to be death-called is to be God-called, to be God-called is to be Christ-found, and to be Christ-found is hope and home and heaven."

How beautiful it is to so live that the lamp of life is trimmed and burning when the Bridegroom comes, so that the sail is spread when the gales of heaven blow, so that the sheaf is ripe when the reapers arrive, so that the fruit is mellow when the day of vintage comes, and so that one can say with Simeon of old, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

And when the sands of life are almost run; when you can almost hear the ripples of the waves on the river of death; when you can almost feel the breath of the death-angel on your cheek; when life's golden day is ebbing to its close; when the twilight of time is melting into the twilight of eternity, whose glory shall in-

crease to an eternal summer noon, then with the laureate poet of the Victorian age may you be able to sing:

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark;

"For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar."

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